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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8074  
INFO NORTH AF NEA AND SOUTH ASIAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE  
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JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS MANILA 002957

SIPDIS

FOR S/ES-CMR, EAP/EX, OBO/OM/AM/EAP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ABLD](#) [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [KSAF](#) [MMED](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY MANILA PREPARED FOR TYPHOON SEASON

REF: (A)06 Manila 4148, (B)06 Manila 4423

¶1. Embassy Manila remains well-prepared and coordinated with local authorities to respond to the upcoming typhoon season, which runs through December. Typically, about 12 typhoons strike the Philippines each year. Mission systems passed a major test on September 29, 2006 when Typhoon Millenyo, the worst typhoon to hit Manila in ten years, brought down power lines, trees and shanties with its 200 mph winds.

¶2. Philippine national and local authorities have long experience with disasters and considerable capacity to respond to them, despite limited resources. The Philippine Defense Department's National Defense Coordinating Council, (NDCC) is the coordinating agency for natural/man-made disaster monitoring, reporting, and recovery in the Philippines. U.S. Mission personnel have close working relationships with NDCC enabling us to be in real-time contact on analysis of disasters and requests for assistance. In 2006 USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$837,000 in assistance in response to three declared disasters, two for typhoons and one for mudslides.

¶3. Mission agencies and sections work as a team with the following responsibilities under Chief of Mission leadership:

¶A. An Economic officer tracks and prepares front channel reports on major typhoons in the Philippines. These reports analyze typhoon impact on population centers, infrastructure, and the overall economy while reporting U.S. assistance, clean-up, and consular assistance to affected Amcits.

¶B. The Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group-Philippines (JUSMAG-P) maintains liaison with key Philippine Government entities responsible for monitoring and assimilating information relevant to natural disasters. Entities include the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical & Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), and the Philippine Institute of Volcano and Seismology (PHIVOLCS). JUSMAG assessed possible U.S. military support during the three most recent typhoons entering the northern part of Luzon although no assistance has been requested this year. In addition to maintaining liaison with Host Nation government and military agencies, JUSMAG-P maintains communication and reporting with the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) Headquarters to coordinate U.S. military assistance for disaster relief, when requested by the Government of the Philippines. JUSMAG-P remains prepared to stand up its internal support operations within an hour of notification and/or anticipation of a crisis and act as the USPACOM forward. They are likewise poised to deploy LNOs to forward air/sea hubs to affected areas and embed U.S. military advisors with Armed Forces of the Philippines units in support of a disaster.

¶C. USAID/Philippines, in coordination with the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in Bangkok, monitors the effects of typhoons, floods, and other natural disasters to help determine when U.S. humanitarian assistance is warranted. USAID has relationships with the Philippine National Red Cross and other local and international NGOs for management of relief supplies and livelihood recovery through partners, when needed.

¶D. Embassy Management Section's GSO prepares emergency

support, including emergency lights, water containers, first aid kits, gloves, masks and emergency repair supplies. GSO further provides central laundry, water, refrigerator and freezer capacity for employees in need, and reserves hotel rooms for displaced USDH. The Mission's locally employed staff receives support as well in the form of water containers, employee association loans, and supplies for emergency residential repair, in addition to emergency dormitory, laundry and kitchen access on both compounds, with bedding and utensils. Emergency kits (bedding, water, tools, first aid kits, mobile medical supplies) are stored on both Embassy compounds for staff in distress and who must stay overnight in an emergency while the Facility Maintenance section maintains round-the-clock crews to handle emergencies.

¶E. Regional Security Office (RSO) responds to life-safety concerns of Mission employees and works to ensure the security of Mission facilities and residences and readies a large guard force for bad weather. RSO works closely with the Marine Security Guard Detachment for radio messaging and ensures that host country emergency equipment is available for evacuation or clean-up of Embassy facilities.

¶F. Finally, the Information Management Section (IMO) manages an extensive text messaging, telephone tree and neighborhood warden communication system, the backbone of crisis communications.

¶4. Post is scheduled for an FSI Crisis Management Exercise next month and will continue to refine preparations in hopes that, like carrying an umbrella on a sunny day, we'll forestall the worst by being prepared.

KENNEY